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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [RS](#) [AZ](#) [GG](#) [MD](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: CREATION OF A GUAM SECRETARIAT CENTRAL TO GUAM'S
FUTURE REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION

REF: A. A. KYIV 666
[1](#)B. B. KYIV 131

Classified By: Political Counselor Kent Logsdon for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. First Deputy Minister of Georgia and GUAM National Coordinator Valery Chechelashvili sounded an optimistic note during our conversation with him after the March 15-16 GUAM Council of National Coordinators (CNC) meeting. Chechelashvili, slated to be GUAM's new Secretary General once the organization is formally established, seemed pleased with recent progress on GUAM-related issues. He acknowledged that establishing the Secretariat was central to breathing life into GUAM as a regional organization. He expected all four member countries to ratify the GUAM Charter (Ukraine and Moldova must still do so) prior to the next summit, now expected to take place June 26-27 in Baku. National Coordinators had finalized the texts of three documents that will be signed at the summit: the budget of about \$500,000 per year, an agreement on Privileges and Immunities for Secretariat staff, and an agreement on joint cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiation security. Chechelashvili said the member states were eager to raise GUAM's profile and planned to hold future CNC meetings in Washington and Brussels, which would be consistent with their vision of GUAM as a vehicle to hasten adoption of European standards in the region. GUAM could also help hasten resolution of the region's "frozen conflicts." Chechashvili publicly supported creation of GUAM peacekeeping forces. In contrast to Chechelashvili's optimism, Rada Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Socialist Vitaly Shybko told Ambassador the prospect for near term passage of the Charter bill is uncertain at best. The same concern was repeated to the Ambassador by new Foreign Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who said that he was worried about ratification of the Charter and would have to work on it.

[1](#)2. (U) Comment. The defection of several opposition Our Ukraine and BYuT Rada members to the majority coalition in the Ukrainian Parliament (ref A) may ultimately weaken the ability of the Communists -- staunch GUAM opponents -- to block approval of the Charter. As political power continues to shift to the Party of Regions, the future of the GUAM Charter bill in the Rada will increasingly depend on the attitude of Yanukovych and his allies, and thus by default the future of GUAM. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)3. (SBU) At our March 16 discussions, Chechelashvili was accompanied by Georgian MFA GUAM Division Director George Nikolaishvili, Georgian Embassy Senior Counselor Levan Nizharadze, and GUAM Information Office Executive Director (Ukrainian) Heorhiy Nazarov. He reviewed the results of the CNC meeting and outlined his plans for energizing GUAM via the GUAM Secretariat. Chechelashvili said he expected to take up his duties as GUAM Secretary General after the conclusion of the next Summit -- now expected to take place on June 26-27 in Baku. He said agreement has been reached on

an annual budget of \$500,000 per year, which would be finalized at the Summit. Chechelashvili remarked that Moldova had approved its budget contribution and that he had addressed Moldovan concerns about the cost of posting their staff member to Kyiv, although he was a little vague on the details. Chechelashvili said the CNC also reached agreement on Privileges and Immunities for Secretariat staff and a treaty on cooperation and mutual aid in issues of nuclear and radiation safety, both of which would be signed at the Baku Summit.

14. (SBU) Chechelashvili praised Nazarov's work and seemed satisfied with the progress on GUAM issues so far. He was confident the Ukraine and Moldova parliaments would approve the GUAM Charter before the Summit and expected to move to Kyiv and assume his duties shortly thereafter. He was eager to demonstrate that GUAM operations would adhere to Western standards and mentioned that he would put a transparent budget process in place. Nazarov and Chechelashvili did not expect the premises for the Secretariat would be ready before October but they anticipated little difficulty in finding a temporary location while renovations on the permanent site were completed.

15. (U) Chechelashvili noted that not all GUAM member states aspire to join NATO but all hope to harmonize their policies with those of the EU; the EU Action plans of all member states had similar priorities. Chechelashvili envisioned GUAM as a vehicle to assist in this process. Chechelashvili, who has publicly stated that GUAM will form a peacekeeping force, also mentioned using GUAM to address the security issues (read 'frozen conflicts,') in the region. He agreed with our suggestion that GUAM should raise its profile with the EU and said he had suggested that GUAM hold a

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Coordinators meeting in Brussels later this year in addition to the planned CNC meeting in Washington in conjunction with a round-table at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

16. (C) Although Chechelashvili was confident the Charter would be approved before the Summit, Rada (parliament) Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Vitaliy Shybko was less sanguine in a March 26 meeting with Ambassador. Shybko said the Presidential office had not made GUAM charter ratification a priority. The Presidential office and MFA needed to launch a publicity campaign to educate the public on GUAM's benefits. For now, the public and Rada members saw GUAM as possibly entangling Ukraine in "frozen conflicts." Many also viewed GUAM as being anti-Russian. Shybko opined that GUAM did provide benefits, for example, by helping Ukraine to integrate better economically in the Black Sea region. The Presidential office and MFA needed to initiate a public discourse to educate the public on this and other benefits flowing from GUAM membership to pave the way for future Rada ratification of the GUAM charter. Shybko provided no timeframe, however, when such ratification might be possible.

17. (C) During a March 29 meeting, new Foreign Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk made the same point to the Ambassador, noting that he was well aware of the GUAM Charter issue and was worried about the prospects for its passage in the Rada. Yatsenyuk assured the Ambassador that he planned to work on the issue.

18. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.gov/p/eur/kiev.
Taylor